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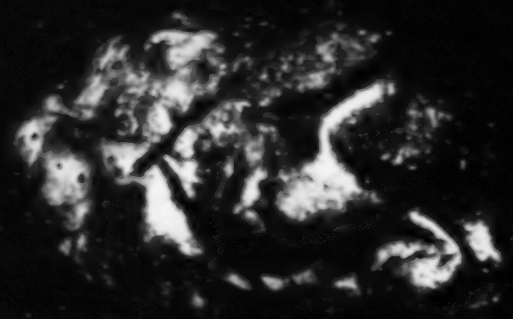
AT&T a year later

Expert systems

Bolstering corporate micros

OA survivors

Preparing for the next slowdown



STALLING
THE BEST COURSE OF EXECUTIVE (IN) ACTION?

1st biweekly issue

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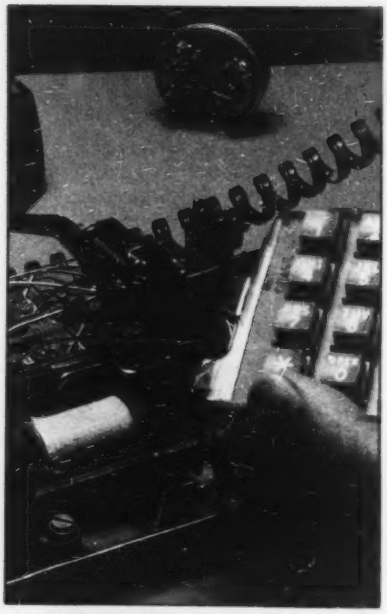

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COVER PHOTO: Rick Barrick

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by Miriam Lacob

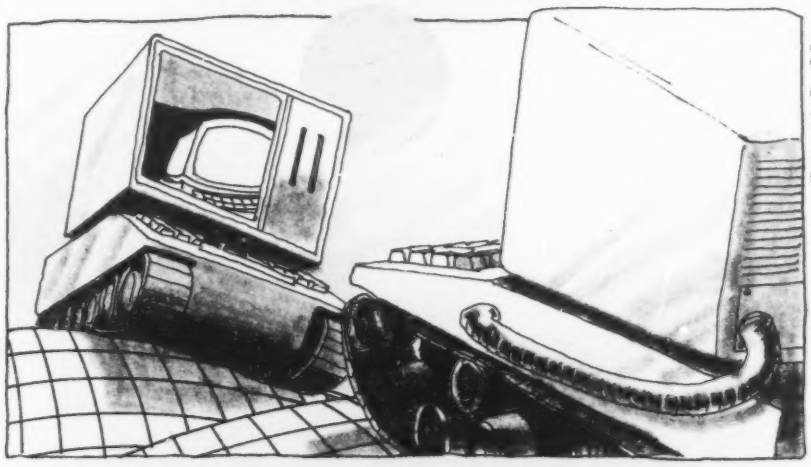

Illustration by Dan Culhane

SURVIVORS OF 1990

A battle for vendor survival—with stakes in the billions of dollars—is raging among office-automation vendors. And office-automation managers, who invest hundreds of thousands of their organizations' dollars in computer equipment, need to target—and avoid—the future casualties of the computer industry. So, ensuring that a vendor will provide long-term service, system upgrades, and hardware compatability has become as important as rating the excellence of a product or system.

Three years ago, *Computer Decisions* launched an annual survey to help forecast the future of well-known OA vendors, in cooperation with the Office Automation Society International. This year, 75 office-automation consultants and managers of OA projects were asked which vendors will be survivors in five years' time. In 1982, 22 experts responded; in 1983, 36; and in 1984, 33 experts responded.

Respondents were asked to predict the survival probabilities of 39 full-line vendors to Fortune 1,000 corporations. The experts were asked to check one of three ratings for each vendor named: "sure survivor," "likely survivor," and "not likely."

In tallying results, a score of 10 points was assigned to each sure-survivor vote, 6 points to each likely survivor vote, and 2 points to each not-likely vote. The chart accompanying this report provides the latest total scores for each vendor, the unit-number of sure-survivor votes each received, and its scores in the previous two annual surveys.

The finish of this year's top five vendors was predictable, with IBM comfortably occupying the top spot. All but two of the 33 respondents gave Big Blue a sure-survivor vote, recognizing that IBM continues to be unmatched in service, marketing muscle, and ability to change with the industry.

Spot number two, which was held last year by Digital Equipment Corp. (DEC), Maynard, MA, is now occupied by AT&T Technologies, Morristown, NJ. Last year, AT&T came in fifth with 272 points—possibly a reflection of uncertainty about the future direction of the communications-and-research colossus.

This year's top ten has three new entrants and four dropouts. Rolm Corp., (Santa Clara, CA), Data General, (Westboro, MA), and Burroughs Corp. (Detroit) are new entrants, and the dropouts are Apple Computer (Cupertino, CA), Honeywell (Minneapolis), Sperry (Blue Bell, PA), and Northern Telecom (Richardson, TX). Although our experts' ratings preceded Rolm's September merger agreement with IBM, the news was already out that Big Blue was purchasing stock in the data- and telecommunications-equipment manufacturer.

Burroughs—in a back-seat position in the mainframe market—is widely perceived to be struggling back to life,

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led by Michael Blumenthal, former Secretary of the Treasury. In contrast, Northern Telecom, another telecommunications specialist, dropped to 11th place.

The survey responses reflect an overwhelming respect for reality. "Longevity will be based as much on depth of finances as on the quality of a product," wrote one respondent. "It costs a lot to play the game." □

Miriam Lacob is a free-lance writer based in New York City.

Next month: Supplying single-site organizations: Playing in the same ball park?

THE FORTUNE 1,000 SURVIVORS

Company	1990	SS Votes	Ranking	Last Survey	SS Votes	1982 Survey	SS Votes
AES Savin	90	0	31(tie)	-	-		
Apple Computer	188	7	12(tie)	250	16	104	5
Anaconda-Ericson	66	1	34(tie)	74	0	-	
Anderson Jacobson	136	5	23	124	3	52	1
AT&T Technologies	306	27	2	272	23	178	16
Bell & Howell	166	8	17	158	5	-	-
Burroughs	206	8	10	196	9	98	0
Canon	156	7	19	-	-	-	-
Computer Consoles	88	1	32	-	-	-	-
CPT	94	0	28	120	2	78	0
Data General	234	13	8	196	8	74	0
Datapoint	178	7	14	162	3	82	0
A.B. Dick	112	4	29	124	3	48	1
Digital Equipment	286	24	3	298	28	172	14
Exxon Office Syst.	126	4	26(tie)	160	8	44	0
Hewlett Packard	274	20	5	284	23	134	8
Honeywell	188	9	12(tie)	234	13	106	2
IBM	316	31	1	342	33	206	20
Kodak	226	16	9	220	16	-	-
Lanier (Harris)	132	3	24	172	17	90	2
Motorola (Four Phase)	146	2	22	134	6	74	1
NBI	150	3	20	120	4	92	1
NEC Information Syst.	176	4	15	144	9	70	0
Nixdorf	90	1	31(tie)	72	1	46	0
Northern Telecom	196	9	11	206	14	102	5
Olivetti	126	3	26(tie)	112	3	72	1
Philips (Micom)	92	0	30(tie)	110	6	78	0
Prime Computer	148	3	21	152	5	80	2
Rolm	244	16	7	152	8	98	4
Royal	76	0	33	106	3	46	0
Sony	130	2	25	162	8	70	1
Sperry	174	10	16	196	11	84	0
Syntrex	92	0	30(tie)	78	1	48	0
Tandem	158	8	18	142	4	80	0
Tandy (Radio Shack)	118	1	27	160	5	70	3
3M	184	10	13	190	12	-	-
Wang	278	22	4	288	25	194	17
Wordplex	66	0	34(tie)	60	1	38	0
Xerox	250	17	6	244	18	164	11

The ratings of Fortune 1,000 vendor-survivors are based on responses from OA experts asked to predict which OA vendors will still be in the game in five years. Scores in the year columns indicate the cumulative tallies for each vendor of sure-survivor votes (10 points), likely survivor votes (6 points), and not-likely votes (2 points).